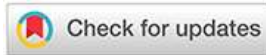


INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION OF PRISON OFFICERS IN SECURITY CONTROL AT CLASS I PENITENTIARY IN MEDAN



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ABSTRACT

This research examines the interpersonal communication of Class I Medan Correctional Institution (Lapas) officers in security control. With the increasing challenges of maintaining security within prisons, it is important for officers to adopt a positive and effective communication approach. The purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence interpersonal communication and its impact on security stability in prisons. The method used is a qualitative approach through interviews with officers and prisoners, as well as field observations to obtain in-depth data. The results show that the lack of training in positive communication, high levels of stress, differences in communication styles, and the limited number of officers are the main obstacles in managing effective communication. In conclusion, to improve security at Medan Class I prisons, better training for officers in interpersonal communication is needed, as well as strategies that can reduce stress and facilitate more positive interactions with prisoners.

Keywords: *Interpersonal Communication; Correctional Institution; Security*



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INTRODUCTION

The independence achieved by this nation affected the prison system that was then in effect in Indonesia until on 5 July 1963 the Correctional System was first delivered by Sahardjo. The correctional system has been in place since 1964 and its existence is so meaningful that it must be supported by a legal umbrella. Which can only be realised until the enactment of Law No. 12 of 1995 concerning Corrections so that in the end it was inaugurated legislation that complements the previous regulation, namely Law No. 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections which strengthens the position of Corrections in the criminal justice system, where previously the correctional system was only involved in the post-adjudication process, now Corrections is involved from the beginning of the Criminal Justice System process. Correctional Institution which is a support to the correctional system in order to strengthen the realisation of a correctional system that guides inmates In Law Number 22 Year 2022 on Corrections

Prisons are an important component of the Indonesian criminal justice system, contributing significantly to law enforcement efforts. As such, prisons bear a heavy and challenging responsibility. Their ultimate goal is the reintegration of prisoners into society as productive members, which requires a comprehensive understanding of their offences, self-improvement during incarceration, and ultimately societal acceptance upon release. Given their role as facilities for the detention and rehabilitation of individuals convicted of criminal offences, prisons have a strategic position within the criminal justice framework. They serve as transitional places for offenders, facilitating their recovery and rehabilitation to prevent recidivism and ultimately earn the designation of 'crime suppressor'. And within the guidance section there is security in correctional institutions (Lapas) which is an integral part of the successful guidance of prisoners. Effective security in prisons plays an important role in ensuring security, order and compliance with established rules and procedures (Saputra & Yuska, 2022).

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 6 of 2013 concerning the Rules of Order of Correctional Institutions and State Detention Centres, the implementation of guidance and services in prisons and detention centres must comply with the rules established for prisoners and detainees. In practice, guidance in prisons and detention centres must run safely and orderly, and based on concrete laws. Correctional institutions have a security system with the aim of creating a calm environment, so as to prevent violence between prisoners or officers. When prisoners feel safe in prison but without comfort, this can lead to new problems, such as potential threats made by prisoners, and cause correctional goals not to be fully achieved. (Saputra & Yuska, 2022). Conflicts that occur in correctional institutions can be caused by several factors that can actually be overcome, such as a lack of communication between prisoners or between prisoners and correctional officers.

Communication can be interpreted as one of the important activities in building relationships with fellow humans. Communication that has been built can create a sense of not being lonely when doing daily activities, communication which is the process of developing information, knowledge, exchanging ideas, feelings between two or more people. Each form of communication that is applied in accordance with the desired objectives and has its own role, there are group communication, mass communication, interpersonal communication, these forms of communication can be used based on needs. (Mukarom, 2020)

Looking at the case of arson/riot in Medan Prison 1 on (12/07/2013). In the case of the burning of Tanjung Gusta prison which experienced overcapacity with 2600 prisoners at the time of the incident, which was triggered by a power outage that occurred

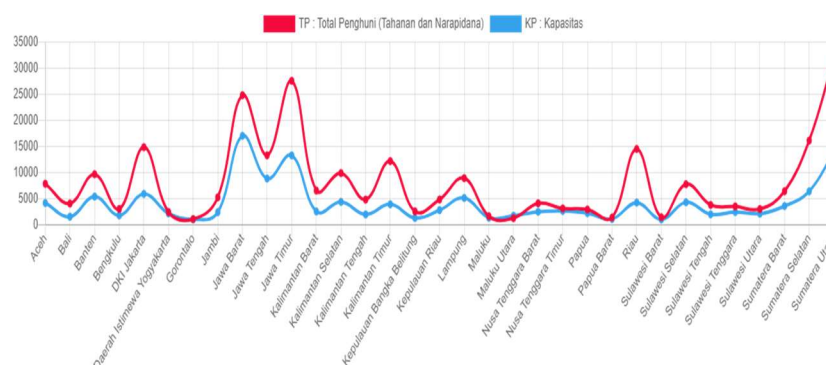
from morning until night and also because of the unavailability of water supply. The riots erupted at sundown during the breaking of the fast and the prisoners were forced to enter their rooms with the power still out. Prisoners who were already angry because their voices were conveyed through communication to employees who did not get a response with no visible action to overcome the problems that occurred from morning to night plus the prisoners who were forced into the room made the beginning of the riot exploded and culminated in arson by the prisoners which caused a number of 150 prisoners including terrorist case prisoners to escape and 4 officers who died as a result of this riot. (Santoso, Aris 2013).

Table 1
Data on Prevention of Security and Order Disorders in 2022

No	Type of Prevention/Failure	Number of Prevention in UPT
1	Drug Smuggling	79
2	Failure/ Capture of Runaways	37
3	Throwing of Goods	23
4	Mobile Phone Smuggling	7
5	Others (Firearms Failure)	1
	Number	14

Source : Public SDP Directorate General of Corrections Ministry of Law and Human Rights , 2024

In the process of communication that is carried out, it does not always go well, there are things that become misunderstandings or conflicts in it. In order to prevent or avoid conflicts that occur, a social order is needed to regulate the interactions that occur between individuals, namely the applicable social norms, and from the problems based on the description above. The increase in the number of prisoners is also very influential in finding various methods in controlling security in prisons through the quality of communication. In the process of achieving this, the Medan Class I Correctional Institution is in dire need of an effective and efficient optimisation of interpersonal communication and the right methods so that the objectives of the ongoing security control can be carried out and the task of ensuring a safe, orderly and comfortable situation can also be achieved.



Source : Directorate General of Corrections of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, 2024

Figure 1
Prison Overcapacity per Regional Office

Data from the Public SDP of the Directorate General of Corrections of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia as of 8 February 2024 shows overcapacity in correctional institutions, with a total population of 266,547 people, while the capacity is only 137,137 people. This means there is an excess of 129,410 residents. In this condition, correctional officers need to optimise interactions with prisoners to build effective communication. The success of communication can be seen from the decline in the number of security and order disturbances in prisons. Serang prison, for example, requires an appropriate strategy to control prisoners. Research shows that interpersonal communication between officers and prisoners is important for the prevention and control of prisoner activity, serving as a medium for early detection and control. This strategy should focus on behaviour change and maintaining order with an approach of understanding, empathy, and support, so that the information conveyed can be well received by prisoners.

Optimisation of interpersonal communication is crucial at Medan Class I Correctional Institution, especially in light of the overcapacity and riot that occurred in 2013. With the increasing number of inmates, communication between correctional officers and inmates needs to be optimised. This can start with socialisation, greetings to residents of the residential blocks, and briefings during roll call. These kinds of positive interactions can create social bonds that motivate inmates to abide by the rules and give them the opportunity to participate in decision-making. This research aims to optimise officers' communication to prisoners to ensure security control. Based on this background, the author is interested in further research with the title 'Optimisation of Interpersonal Communication of Prison Officers in Security Control of Prisoners at Class I Medan Correctional Institution'.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interpersonal communication, as defined by DeVito, involves the sending and receiving of messages between two individuals or small groups, resulting in direct effects and reactions. This form of communication is highly valued for its effectiveness in influencing the behaviors of others, particularly when the goals of the conversation align. During interpersonal interactions, the exchange of information and emotions between individuals is crucial for fostering mutual understanding and preventing misunderstandings. Although DeVito's theories may not be as structured as some other communication theories, they present several key principles essential for understanding interpersonal communication dynamics. These principles highlight the importance of communication as an information exchange, the necessity of meaning comprehension, and the impact of communication on relationship dynamics.

Understanding communication as an exchange of information is fundamental to DeVito's theory. This process involves both verbal and nonverbal messages being sent and received between individuals. Each interaction is more than a simple transfer of words; it is a complex process where the nuances of meaning and intent play a significant role. The effectiveness of communication often hinges on how well both parties grasp the intended meanings behind the words exchanged. Additionally, interpersonal communication encompasses various behaviors that can be learned and modified over time. By recognizing these behaviors, individuals can enhance their communication skills, leading to more successful interactions. This adaptability is particularly crucial as interpersonal communication evolves over time and must be tailored to different situations and contexts.

The dynamics of interpersonal relationships are central to DeVito's perspective on communication. He emphasizes that communication plays a vital role in building, maintaining, or even damaging interpersonal connections. Relationships thrive on the quality of communication, which facilitates trust, understanding, and collaboration. Conversely, poor communication can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts that jeopardize these relationships. Effective interpersonal communication fosters a supportive environment where individuals feel valued and understood. As such, both the intention behind the communication and the resultant effects on relationships are critical components that contribute to the overall effectiveness of interpersonal exchanges.

To achieve effective communication, a well-defined communication model is essential. This model involves several stages, beginning with the preparation of the message. Understanding the audience is a crucial first step for communicators, as it allows them to tailor their messages to resonate with the listeners. This engagement ensures that the communication is meaningful and relevant, fostering a collaborative environment where mutual interests align. The next step involves crafting the message itself, which should be engaging enough to capture attention and motivate the audience to act in accordance with the communicators' objectives. Determining the appropriate method of delivery is also critical, as it influences how the message is perceived and understood by the audience.

Optimizing in communication aims to achieve desired outcomes effectively and efficiently. The process of optimizing interpersonal communication is particularly significant in contexts requiring security management, as it serves as a measure of success. Clear understanding and interpretation of messages are vital to minimizing misunderstandings, which often arise from differences in language or perception. Ultimately, the goal of optimizing interpersonal communication is to foster a stable environment among staff and inmates, encouraging positive engagement within residential blocks. This approach aligns with broader policy objectives, aiming for improved outcomes through effective communication strategies that promote understanding and cooperation among all parties involved.

METHOD

Qualitative research methods, according to Strauss and Corbin, focus on an in-depth understanding of various aspects of people's lives, including human behaviour and organisational dynamics. This research aims to explore the meanings that arise from social interactions in the field, using data obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation (Farida, 2008). Qualitative research is applied in various disciplines such as sociology and psychology, with the main purpose of identifying interactive patterns in the phenomenon under study and discovering new theories based on the results of the analysis. In this context, the researcher used a qualitative approach to explore the issue of communication between Medan Class I prison officers and prisoners.

A descriptive qualitative research design was chosen to analyse social phenomena related to prison officers' interpersonal communication. This design includes technical steps that need to be taken, such as sampling and data collection methods, as well as ensuring that the information obtained describes the existing reality (Kuncoro in Nasution, 2023). This research also involves primary data sources, which are information obtained directly from correctional officers and prisoners, as well as secondary data sources that include related literature and documents. By combining these two data sources, the researcher aims to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the optimisation of communication in Medan Class I Correctional Institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpersonal Communication Strategies of Prison Officers in Security Control at Class I Medan Correctional Institution

In implementing policies and activity plans, the importance of strategy is key to achieving the goals of the institution or company, including in security control at Medan Class I Correctional Institution. Security control relies heavily on good communication, where certain methods and programmes are implemented to help inmates develop personal qualities and prepare them to return to society. Officers have a crucial role in persuasive and spiritual approaches, as well as in applying effective communication media. Officers' duties include internal and external coordination, the establishment of intelligence teams, the enhancement of inmate development, as well as strengthening the relationship between officers and prisoners. Good coordination prevents security disturbances, while intelligence serves to analyse information to maintain stability. Coaching is divided into personality and independence, aiming for rehabilitation and assisting inmates when returning to society. In addition, harmonious communication between officers and prisoners is important to create a conducive atmosphere, where grievances and aspirations can be raised without fear. This includes effective selection of block guardians and regular activities such as 'correctional greetings' to maintain emotional relationships and address the needs of prisoners.

In security control at Lapas 1 Medan, the use of communication media, especially interpersonal communication, becomes highly relevant to achieve effective social control. Prison officers try to ensure good communication with prisoners, prioritising a persuasive approach that involves understanding the individual characters of prisoners. As stated by the Head of KPLP Lapas 1 Medan, Eben Heizer Depari, good communication is essential to build trust between officers and prisoners, especially in conditions of over-capacity population. The approach includes getting to know the prisoners' backgrounds, so that they feel cared for and comfortable in their interactions. Security Section Chief, James Damanik, emphasises that it is important not to show authority directly when establishing communication, but rather seek common ground to build trust. In addition, the communication strategy also involves crafting messages that motivate prisoners to stay away from deviant behaviour, with family support as an important element in the monitoring process. Positive attitudes between officers and prisoners can create a conducive environment, so that informative, persuasive, and educative communication can be carried out effectively. Methods such as lectures, counselling, and group discussions serve to increase inmates' understanding of procedures, rights, and obligations, which can further assist their rehabilitation process. Thus, security control through interpersonal communication at Lapas 1 Medan plays an important role in creating a safe and supportive atmosphere for prisoners' rehabilitation.

The dimensions of openness, empathy, supportiveness, and equality at Medan Class I Correctional Facility play an important role in building positive communication between officers and prisoners, which is crucial for the social reintegration of prisoners after their sentence. Openness is demonstrated through honest communication that helps prisoners understand the applicable rules and procedures, while empathy requires officers to understand prisoners' feelings, listen to their complaints, and value them as individuals. A supportive attitude creates an environment that facilitates inmates' communication and participation in the coaching process, as well as providing assistance in solving any problems they may face. Equality ensures fair treatment without discrimination, which is important to prevent abuse of power and safeguard human rights. With an interpersonal communication approach involving these dimensions,

Medan Class I prison officers can build constructive relationships, encourage positive prisoner behaviour, and improve security and order within the prison.

At Lapas 1 Medan, various security control methods are implemented to create a safe environment and support the rehabilitation of prisoners. Strong social bonds between prisoners and officers, as well as families and communities, play an important role in preventing deviant behaviour, with open communication helping officers obtain information about prisoners' daily lives. A commitment to social goals is also emphasised, with a focus on rehabilitation and resocialisation that respects human rights, including access to education and job training. Institutional engagement encourages the active participation of prisoners in the rehabilitation process, transforming them from passive subjects into responsible individuals. Trust between officers and inmates built through positive communication creates a stable atmosphere, while the fair application of rewards and punishments maintains discipline. In addition, the provision of alternative opportunities such as work and educational activities, as well as effective supervision, support security control with a humanist approach. Family and community support is also integrated, including training programmes and counselling services to improve relationships and reduce the potential for prisoners to return to criminal behaviour. Through these measures, Lapas 1 Medan seeks to create an environment conducive to rehabilitation, improve security, and prepare prisoners for reintegration into society.

Obstacles Faced by Officers in Security Control of Prisoners through Interpersonal Communication

Prison officers face a number of challenges in maintaining security with positive communication approaches. One of the main barriers is the lack of training in communication methods that emphasise empathy and active listening. Many officers are not trained to avoid reactive or abusive communication, which can exacerbate conflict. As a result, ineffectiveness in addressing issues can create misunderstandings and tension between officers and prisoners. This situation often leaves prisoners feeling disrespected and exacerbates the potential for rule violations as well as violent incidents within prisons.

High stress levels are also a significant challenge. Lapas 1 Medan is a stressful environment for both officers and prisoners. Under these conditions, the ability to maintain positive communication is crucial. Officers who are not skilled in understanding the emotional needs of prisoners often overlook psychological issues that can affect security stability. Prisoners who feel frustrated or depressed are more likely to break the rules, and officers who are stuck in an authoritarian communication style can make matters worse, making effective communication even more difficult.

Differences in communication styles among officers and prisoners also pose a challenge. Prisons are populated by individuals with diverse educational backgrounds, cultures and personalities, which affect the way they communicate. For example, some people may be more expressive, while others are more passive. Differences in information delivery, tone of voice, as well as body gestures can hinder understanding between officers and prisoners. Officers who are used to detailed communication may struggle to understand prisoners who are less specific in conveying information, which can result in misinterpretation and tension.

In addition, the limited number of officers compared to the excessive number of prisoners makes the situation even more difficult. With a heavy workload, officers are required to be reliable mediators and skilled in defusing conflicts through effective communication. However, prison overcrowding often hinders the personalised approach

needed to build positive relationships with prisoners. Prisoners' negative perceptions of authority also make it difficult to receive positive communication from officers. Without adequate training, officers often rely on the experience and knowledge of seniors, making it difficult for them to adapt to rapidly changing situations and maintain the desired security.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Optimising the interpersonal communication of Class I Medan Correctional Institution (Lapas) officers in security control shows that there are several challenges that need to be overcome to achieve effective communication. Firstly, the lack of training in positive communication is a major obstacle. Many officers do not receive sufficient education in communication methods that focus on empathy and active listening. The inability to deal with conflict in a gentle and non-aggressive manner can increase the risk of tensions and offences within prisons. This is exacerbated by the high levels of stress experienced by both officers and prisoners, which makes the situation even more complex. In this stressful environment, positive communication is crucial, but is often hampered by officers' inability to understand and respond to the emotional needs of prisoners. Therefore, training and development of interpersonal communication skills is essential to create an atmosphere conducive to better interactions between officers and prisoners, as well as in reducing incidents that could compromise security.

In addition, differences in communication styles between officers and prisoners also contribute to the challenges faced in security control. The diversity of educational backgrounds, cultures and personalities among prisoners affects the way they communicate, thus creating difficulties in understanding each other's messages. Officers who are used to a particular communication approach may have difficulty when dealing with inmates who have different communication styles, which can lead to miscommunication and conflict. With a limited number of officers compared to the excessive prison population, better strategies are needed to approach each individual personally. Given that many prisoners have a negative perception of authority, it is important for officers to build trust and create positive communication channels. Therefore, optimising interpersonal communication is not only the responsibility of individual officers, but also requires systemic support from the institution to conduct ongoing training and create a more supportive working environment for officers in carrying out their duties, so that security control at Medan Class I Prison can be realised more effectively and efficiently.

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